

A
DISSERTATION

ON

2 THESS. II. I, ----- 12.

In which 'tis shewn that the

Bishop of R O M E

IS THE

M A N of S I N.

That the whole *Prophecy*, in that Chapter, is applicable to him and his Adherents, and to them alone.

Nor can we, at this Day, describe the *Apostasy* of the *Church of Rome*, in a more concise and lively Manner, than the APOSTLE has done in that short and remarkable Prophecy.

By the A U T H O R of a PARAPHRASE
and NOTES on the Epistles of St. PAUL to
Philemon, 1st *Thessalonians*, 2d *Thessalonians*,
1st *Timothy*, *Titus*, 2d *Timothy*. Attempted in
Imitation of Mr. *Locke's* Manner.

The S E C O N D E D I T I O N.

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DISSERTATION

ON THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF RICHARD

THE FIRST

BY

J. H. M.

ESQ.

LONDON

1784



ADVERTISEMENT

Concerning this

SECOND EDITION.

AS *this Dissertation* has been printed in Quarto, and is not to be had without buying the *Paraphrases and Notes, on six of St. PAUL's Epistles, in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner*; --- the *Author* has been prevailed upon, by the Request of some of his

A 2 Friends,

[ii]

Friends, to print *this Edition*,
separate ; for the Use of such
as may chuse to have this small
Piece by it self.



A



A
DISSERTATION

Concerning the
Man of SIN, &c.

2 THESS. II. I-----12.

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by 1.
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and by our gathering together unto
him, that ye be not soon shaken 2.
in mind, or be troubled, neither by
spirit, nor by word, nor by letter,
as from us, as that the day of
Christ is at hand.*

*Let no man deceive you by any 3.
means: for that day shall not come,
except*

- except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the
4. son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
 5. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these
 6. things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be re-
 7. vealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he
 8. be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, (whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
 9. Even him) whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power,
 10. and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that

that they might be saved. And for^{11.} this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie : That they all might^{12.} be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.



POPERY, however artfully disguised in *Protestant Countries*, and where there is Liberty for free Inquiry, continues still to be a most corrupt and tyrannical *Religion*, in Places where 'tis established and protected by the Sword of the *Magistrate*.

As the **APOSTLES** had the *prophetic Spirit* in the highest Degree, and *Poper*y is such a notorious Corruption of *Christianity*, a Corruption which has spread so far and wide, and continued so long in the World; one would naturally expect to find Predictions, in their *Writings*, concerning *this grand Apostasy*, to prevent the true *Christians* of later Ages from being shocked at the Appearance of so disagreeable a State of Things. Such a *Prophecy*, as I apprehend, is contained in this *Chapter*, v. 1, — 12.

St. PAUL planted the *Christian Church* at *Thessalonica*. After he had left that Place, the *Christians* fell into a Mistake, concerning the Coming of *the day of the LORD*, imagining

gining that St. PAUL thought it to be just at Hand. To rectify that Mistake (which he suspected had been occasioned, either by his Discourses, when he was among them, or by a *Letter*, which he had wrote since;— to rectify that Mistake, I say) he sent this *second Epistle*, in which he acquaints them that *that Day* could not be so near; because a great and remarkable *Apostasy* was first to happen in the *Christian Church*.

That *the day of CHRIST*, v. 2. doth not refer to *our LORD's* coming to destroy *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish Nation*, will plainly appear, if we look into the Rise and Progress of this Mistake. In the *former Epistle*, Chap. iv. 13, &c. the APOSTLE dissuaded the *Thessalonians* from an excessive Sorrow, upon the Death of their Friends; such as the *Heathens* were commonly guilty of; putting them in mind of the *Christian Promise* of a glorious Resurrection to eternal Life. When that Resurrection and compleat Happiness will commence, he there informs them, *viz.* at the Coming of the LORD, when the *Christians*, who shall be then found alive upon the Earth, shall be transformed; as well as the Dead be raised, and the Righteous all made happy. Having mentioned *that Coming of the LORD*, or of *the Day of the LORD*, he, in the Beginning of the 5th Chapter, goes on with his Discourse about *that day*; assuring them that it would come suddenly and surprizingly, and that (as the particular Time

was

was unknown) Men should always be prepared; but he said nothing there, how nigh, or how distant, he apprehended it to be; and (very probably) from that his Silence arose the Mistake of the *Christians* at *Thessalonica*.

As soon as the APOSTLE understood that they had mistaken his Meaning, he wrote to 'em this *second Letter*; the principal Design of which was to set them right about this Point. And he seems to have been very solicitous to set them right in this Particular; lest they shou'd have been tempted to have thrown off *Christianity it self*; when they should find that the Event did not happen, according to their Expectations. When he was among them, he had told them that *a grand Apostasy* was to happen; and therefore *the Day of the LORD* was at some Distance. That *Prophecy* he now repeats, and intimates to them that it was a plain Proof of the Distance of *that great Day*. If therefore *the Day*, or *coming of the LORD*, 1 Thess. iv. 15, &c. and v. 1, &c. ought to be understood of *the Day of Judgment*, when CHRIST shall descend, the Dead shall be raised, and the *Generation* then living transformed; as it certainly ought to be: I think it evident, that it ought ^a so to be understood in this Place also; for of *the same Day*, and the *same coming of the LORD*, he appears to be speaking

^a St. *Auf.* de Civit, Dei, L. xx. c. 19.

in both the *Epistles*. And, what may further confirm this, is, that by *that day*^a, or *the coming of the LORD*, is generally meant his coming to judge the World. As, therefore, this is the usual Meaning of the Phrase, in^a other Places of the *New Testament*, and the most evident Meaning of it in these two *Epistles* to the *Thessalonians*; we have no Occasion (upon that Account) to look for *the Man of Sin*, and the *grand Apostasy*, before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; as they are obliged to do, who understand *this coming of the LORD* to refer to the Destruction of that City.

None of the seven following Interpretations of *this Prophecy* appear to me to be well grounded.

(1.) *Grotius* would persuade us that *Caius Caligula* was *the Man of Sin*, here *prophefied* of. Whereas, according to the Account of all the latest and best *Chronologers*, this *Epistle* was written about twelve Years after the Death of that *Emperor*. It could not, therefore, surely be a Prophecy of the Wick- edness and Cruelty of *Caligula*.

(2.) *Dr. Hammond* would have *Simon Magus* and the *Gnostics* to be here design'd; but *S. Magus* had already show'd himself an Ene-

^a See Matt. xxv. 31. Acts xvii. 37. 1 Cor. i. 8. and iii. 13. and v. 5. and xv. 23. 2 Cor. i. 14. Eph. iv. 30. compared with Rom. viii. 23. Philip. i. 6; 10. and ii. 16. 1 Thes. ii. 19. and iii. 13. and v. 23. 2 Thes. i. 10. 2 Tim. i. 12; 18. and iv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 19. and ii. 9. and iii. 4. — 10; 12. 1 John iv. 17. Jud. ver. 14. and many other Places, where Phrases of the same Import are made use of, as 1 Pet. i. 7; 13, &c.

my to *Christianity* at *Samaria*; and therefore was not yet to be revealed. And as to his Conflict with St. PETER at *Rome*, and many of the Doctor's Stories about the *Gnostics*, they seem to be built upon too sandy a Foundation, to deserve any great Regard. Dr. *Whitby* and Mr. *Le-Clerc* have abundantly confuted that Interpretation.

Grotius's introducing *Simon Magus*, Ver. 8, 9. is as groundless, for the APOSTLE doth there evidently continue to speak of the same Person, that he had began with, Ver. 3, 4. and if *Grotius* saw that the whole Prophecy could not agree either to *Caligula*, or to *Simon Magus* and his deluded Followers, I think he ought, in his Interpretation, to ~~have~~ have referred no Part of it to either of them.

(3.) ^a Others would have the *unbelieving Jews*, who persecuted the *Christians* before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and made many of them *apostatize* to *Judaism*, to be the Man of Sin, &c. But this Interpretation appears to me to be not well grounded. For the *unbelieving Jews*, tho' they did, indeed, persecute the *Christians*; yet they were not united under any one eminent Head, or Leader. They were never able to exalt themselves above all, that is called a *God*, or an *Emperor*, i. e. above all the Kings and Potentates upon Earth. Nor had they, after

^a See Mr. *La-Roché's* new *Memoirs* of Literature, for Sept. 1726.

this Time, any one Person among them, *Who sate in the Temple of GOD*, shewing and manifesting himself to be *a God*, or to be possessed of the Power of a King, or temporal Monarch.

Nor doth St. PAUL appear to me to be by any Means *be that letted*, Ver. 6. 7. for the *unbelieving Jews* persecuted the *Christians* after his Conversion, as well as before it; nor could he prevent the *Apostasy* of the *Jewish Christians* by labouring (as he generally did) among the *Gentile Churches*.

Besides, in the *Prophecy* of St. PAUL, the *Apostasy* was (in a great Degree, at least,) to precede *the Revelation of the Man of Sin*; whereas, the persecuting *anticristian* Spirit of the *unbelieving Jews* was revealed, or manifested, before the *Apostasy* of the *Jewish Christians*.

And, finally, 'tis a grand Objection with me against that Interpretation, that by the *Man of Sin's* appearing, and being revealed, is understood his *Perishing* and *Destruction*. In as much as St. PAUL hath clearly distinguished his Coming, and the Continuance of his Power, from the Punishment and Perdition which would be, at last, inflicted on him by the LORD.

(4.) "Others, again, would have the *unbelieving Jews*, who revolted from the *Romans*, together with the *Jewish Converts*, who apostatized from the *Christians* to the *Jewish Religion*, to be the Persons here prophesied of."

Whereas,

Whereas, what the APOSTLE is here speaking of, was an *Apostasy* from the *true Religion*. For so the Word ^a *αποστασία* signifieth in other Places of the *New Testament*: And what will lead us to understand it so, in this Place, is, that it was to be carried on by “sham Miracles, and all the Deceivableness of Unrighteousness; and should prevail only among vicious Persons, who had an Enmity to Truth, and loved Lies and Wickedness.” But the *unbelieving Jews* could not *apostatize* from the *Christian Religion*; because they had never embraced it; and the *Jewish Christians*, who did *apostatize*, had no eminent Head or Leader, that deserved the Name of *the Man of Sin*, &c. Dr. *Whitby*, who is the most considerable Advocate for this Interpretation, plays between the two; and brings in the *unbelieving Jews* revolting from the *Romans*, or the *Jewish Christians* falling away from *Christianity*; just as may best help him out in his *Hypothesis*. But the *Prophecy* itself is uniform, and describes one Sort of *Apostasy*, quite throughout.

(5.) As *Mahomet* himself did never profess the *Christian Religion*, he could not be called an *Apostate*. However, as he made many *Christians* to *apostatize*, and built *his Religion* partly upon the Ruin and Corruption of *Christianity*, he might (in some Sense) be said to sit in the Temple of God. He likewise (tho’ he pretended to be an extraordi-

^a Acts xxi. 21. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. iii. 12.

nary Prophet) shewed himself to be in Reality *no Prophet*, but a *temporal Prince*; and he arose after the Downfal of the *Roman Empire*. Which I take to have been the (*το καλειχον*) *that which hindered* the Appearance of *the Man of Sin*. All this may be said in Favour of them who understand this as a *Prophecy of Mahomet*. But then (1.) Suppose that St. JOHN and St. PAUL prophesied of the same Thing (as I think they did) 'tis evident that *Rome* must be the Seat of *the grand Impostor*. For Rev. xvii. 9, 18. the City, which stood upon seven Hills, and then reigned over the Kings of the Earth, was to be the Seat of this *tyrannical Power*. (2.) 'Tis a sufficient Argument against applying *this Prophecy* to *Mahomet*, that this *wicked one* was to come after the Working of *Satan*, with all Power and Signs and lying Wonders, *i. e.* with great Pretensions to *Miracles*. Whereas *Mahomet* did not pretend to establish himself and his *Imposture* by *Miracles*. For, tho' several *Miracles* are ascribed to him, by the fabulous and legendary Writers among the *Mahometans*; yet their learned Men renounce them all. * Nor doth *Mahomet* himself, in the *Koran*, lay any Claim to them.

(6.) Tho' *Rome Heathen* opposed *Christianity* very much, and the *Emperors* exalted themselves above all the Kings and Princes

* See Dr. Prideaux's *Life of Mahomet*, p. 31. and Mr. Sale's Translation of *Al Koran*, p. 203, 236, 473.

upon

upon the Earth; yet this their Exaltation was not a Thing then *to be revealed*. Neither did they *apostatize* from *Christianity*, nor sit in the *Temple of God*, nor pretend to establish their power by *Miracles*.

(7.) The *Papists*, in their *Annotations* on the *Rhemish New Testament*, interpret this *Apostasy* to be "the falling away of the *Protestants* from the *Church of Rome*." And so (by a strange *Legerdemain*) we are to be the *Man of Sin*, or his Forerunners at least. Whereas, it doth not certainly appear that there was any *Christian Church* at *Rome*, when St. PAUL wrote this *second Epistle* to the *Thessalonians*. Nor are we united under any one common Head upon Earth; nor do we pretend to establish our Doctrine by *Miracles*. These and many other Things plainly show, that 'tis ridiculous to apply this *Prophecy* to the Reformation from *Popery*.

As we have rejected these *Misinterpretations*, the next Thing is to point out the APOSTLE's Meaning. And, however difficult it may appear, upon a transient Reading, to fix the Sense of so short and general a *Prophecy* as this; I will venture to say, that *no Prophecy* could have been more exactly accomplished, than this hath been, in the *Bishop of Rome*, and his Adherents. And therefore, as it agrees to them, and the Whole of it to them only; there is the greatest Reason to think, that it was designed for them; especially as it is a singular
Event,

Event, the like to which never happened before, and (most probably) never will happen again.

But let us go over the several Parts of the *Prophecy*.

Ver. 3. "Before the Coming of the Day of the Lord there was to happen a *Falling away*, or an *Apostasy*." And, accordingly, what an *Apostasy* from the true *Christian* Worship, Doctrine, and Practice, hath happened; and is supported by the Church of *Rome*? Instead of worshiping God with Simplicity, and in Spirit and Truth, they have introduced external Pomp and numerous Ceremonies, which strike upon the Senses and ingage the Attention without mending the Heart.

Instead of worshiping God through JESUS CHRIST (the only Mediator between God and Men) they have substituted the Doctrine of *Dæmons*, i. e. the Spirits of Men departed out of this Life, who (as they pretend) intercede ^a with God for us; and they invoke the *Virgin Mary* more frequently than God himself. They have not only succeeded *Rome Heathen*, in the Seat of *Empire*; but have also apostatized into their Imagery and Idolatry ^b. Though they have, indeed, dif-

^a See the late Popish Catechism, Chap. 8. Concil. Trident. Sess. xxv.

^b See the Account given by Dr. Middleton, who was himself at *Rome*, and had thereby an Opportunity to observe the Similitude between the *Religion* of antient and present *Rome*. See also Sir *Isaac Newton's* late Book on the *Prophecies*, &c. p. 204.

guised it with new Names and different Pretensions.

Instead of the *Christian Doctrine*, they have *apostatized* from the Faith, and in many Countries taken from the common People the Liberty of reading the *Scriptures* in their Mother Tongue; that they might, with the more Ease, propagate their own Delusions.

For, having in a forcible and violent Manner, restrained the Liberty of private Judgment, they have with less Difficulty substituted, instead of the most excellent *Doctrine* of the *Gospel*, their own Articles of Faith, and the forged Traditions and lying Legends of their *Church*. And not content barely to propagate Ignorance, they have dared most impudently to commend it, and called it *the Mother of Devotion*.

Their encouraging the *Apostasy* in *Practice*, will be taken Notice of in the Sentences that immediately follow.

THIS GRAND APOSTASY was to proceed gradually to its Height. But when it came to such a Pitch; then was to be revealed one, who should deservedly be called, *the Man of Sin, and Son of Perdition*.

That this Phrase may denote a Succession of Persons one after another, tho' but one at a Time, may appear from *Deut. xvii. 14----*20. where that Phrase, the *King of Israel*, must be understood, not of one King only, but of a Succession of Kings; and from ^a several Texts, where the *Jewish High-Priest* is spoken of as one Person, tho' any one in that Succession of *High-Priests* is thereby intended. And to whom can

^a Lev. xxi. 10. Numb. xxxv. 25, 28. Josh. xx. 6. Heb. ix. 7.

the Title of *the Man of Sin* so properly belong, as to the Succession of the *Bishops of Rome*, for many past Centuries? There have been among them, not only some of the vilest of Mankind, notorious for their Cruelty, Infidelity, Debauchery, Simony, and all Manner of Wickedness. But by their ^a Indulgences, Pardons, and Dispensations, ^a which they claim a Power from CHRIST of granting; and which they have sold in so infamous ^b a Manner, they have encouraged all Manner of vile and wicked *Practices*. Instead of shewing Men the Necessity of sincere Repentance, unfeigned Faith, and an holy Life and Conversation; they have contrived numberless Methods to render an holy Life entirely needless; — to indulge Men in the greatest and most abominable Vices, and yet assure them of Heaven; even without a thorough Repentance, provided they will sufficiently pay them for their Admission.

The Form of *Indulgences*, ^b a little before the Reformation, was so ample, that rich Men were

^a See the late Popish Catechism, c. x. ^b Mr. Bayle (in his *Dictionary*, under the Article *Banck*, Laurence) hath given us the History of a remarkable Book, called, *The Taxes of the Romish Chancery*: In which there is a very particular Account how much Money was to be paid into the *Apostolic*, or *Pope's* Chamber, for almost all Sorts of Vices. Ex. gr. "He who had been guilty of
" Incest with his Mother, Sister, or other Relation, either in Consanguinity, or Affinity, is taxed at V. *Gros*. The Absolution of
" him who has deflowered a Virgin, VI. *Gros*. * The Absolution
" of him who has murdered his Father, Mother, Sister, Wife,-----
" V. or VII. *Gros*.

" The Absolution and Pardon of all Acts of *Fornication* committed by any of the *Clergy*, in what Manner soever, whether it
" be with a Nun, within or without the Limits of the Nunnery;
" or with his Relations in Consanguinity, or Affinity, or with his
" God-Daughter, or with any other Woman whatsoever; and
" whether

were unconcerned, what Sins they committed, as knowing that they could, living or dead, purchase a Pardon. For suppose they neglected it in their Life-Time, it was but leaving so much Money by Will, at their Death, for Masses and

C 2

Indul-

“ whether also the said Absolution be given in the Name only of
“ the *Clergyman* himself, or of him jointly with his Whores, with a
“ Dispensation to enable him to take and hold his Orders and eccle-
“ siastical Benefices, and with a Clause also of Inhibition, costs
“ 36 *Tournois*, and 9. or 3 *Ducats*.

“ And if, besides the above, he receives Absolution from Sodo-
“ my, or Bestiality, with the Dispensation and Clause of Inhibi-
“ tion, as before, he must pay 90 *Tournois*, 12 *Ducats*, and 6
“ *Carlins*.

“ But if he only receives Absolution from Sodomy, or Bestiality,
“ with the Dispensation, or Clause of Inhibition, he pays only
“ 36 *Tournois*, and 9 *Ducats*. A *Nun*, having committed Fornica-
“ tion several Times, within and without the Bounds of the Nun-
“ nery, shall be absolved, and enabled to hold all the Dignities of
“ her Order, even that of *Abbess*, by paying 36 *Tournois*, and 9
“ *Ducats*.

“ The Absolution of him who keeps a Concubine, with Dis-
“ pensation to take and hold his Orders, and Ecclesiastical Benefi-
“ ces, costs 21 *Tournois*, 5 *Ducats*, and 6 *Carlins*.”

This is a Translation of the very Words of the *Book* itself. On-
ly the first Articles to the * are wanting in one *Edition*. However,
even these Articles also, are in the most perfect and correct Editions.

This *Book* has been several Times printed both in *Papish* and
Protestant Countries; and the *Protestant Princes* inserted it among
the Causes of their rejecting the Council of *Trent*. When the *Pa-
pists* saw what Use the *Protestants* made of it, they put it into the
List of prohibited Books. But then they condemned it only upon
the Supposition of its having been corrupted by (the *Protestants*, or)
Heretics.

But let them suppose as much as they please, that it has been
corrupted by Heretics; the Editions of it which have been published
in *Papish* Countries, and which the *Papists* can't disown, as that
of *Rome*, 1514. That of *Cologne*, 1515. Those of *Paris* 1520, 1545,
and 1625. And those of *Venice*, one in the VIth Vol. of the *Oceanus
Juris*, published 1533. the other in the XVth Vol. of the same
Collection, reprinted 1584. — These Editions, I say, are more
than sufficient to justify the Reproaches of the *Protestants*, and to
cover the *Church of Rome* with Confusion.

The *Papish Controvertists*, who have not a Word to say against
the Authority of the Edition of *Rome*, or that of *Paris*, &c. are
under

Indulgences, and they were assured that all would be forgiven them. Can such notorious Wickedness always escape without an eminent Perdition?

How justly may *present Rome*, for her Persecution, Idolatry, and notorious Wickedness, be deemed ^a *mystical Babylon*, and be (spiritually, or figuratively) called ^a *Sodom* and *Egypt* (where Wickedness hath risen to an amazing Height, and the *People of God* have been under a long and cruel Bondage) and the *Mother* ^a *of Fornications and of the Abominations of the Earth*?

V. 4. If rightly translated would (I think) have run thus, "Who opposes himself, *i. e.* " to CHRIST, and exalts himself above every " one that is called a God, or (*even*) the Imperial Dignity, so that he, as a God, sits ^b [in-

under great Perplexity. However, since the *Protestants* have made so great an Handle of this *Book*, the *Papists* pretend, that (tho' some of the *Popes* have been guilty of such infamous Practices, and suffered such Books to appear; — yet) the *Church of Rome* in general abhors them.

But she has never shewn, by the Suppression of these *Taxes*, that she has had them in Abhorrence. They have been printed (as has been already observ'd) thrice at *Paris*, twice at *Cologne*, and twice at *Venice*. And some of these *Editions* have been publish'd since *Claude d'Espence*, a *Papist Dr.* exclaimed publicly against the Enormities of this *Book*.

The *Inquisition of Spain*, and that of *Rome* have condemned the *Book*, only as they suppose it to have been corrupted by *Heretics*.

I must add, in the second Place, that the Suppression of such a Work is not a sure Sign of disapproving the Rules it contains. This may only signify that they repented of the Publication of it, as it gave so fair an Handle for the *Heretics* to reproach the *Court of Rome*, and to wound the *Church of Rome*, thro' the Sides of the *Pope*.

These ought to be esteemed *Mysteries of State, Arcana Imperii*, not fit to be divulged. ^a Rev. xi. 8. and xvii. 5. ^b *Kathol.* so the Word signifies, Rev. xvii. 15. and xviii. 7. answering to *שש* Psalm ix. 4. and xxix 10. and cx. 1. Ezek. xxviii 2. Zech. vi. 13.

" throned]

"throned] in the Temple of God, shewing
 "himself to be a God." [*Who opposes him-
 self*] that is, to CHRIST, and true *Christians*.
 And who have done this more than the *Church
 of Rome*? Witness their infamous *Croisades*,
 and the cruel Massacres of the *Albigenses* and
Waldenses, of whom they are said to have slain
 above ^a 900,000.

In ^b about 30 Years from the first founding
 of the Order of *Jesuits*, above 800,000 of the
Protestants were put to Death, by the Hand of
 the Executioner only. Besides great Numbers
 who perished several other Ways, of whom we
 have now no particular Account remaining.
 The ^b *Duke of Alva* boasted of his having,
 in a few Years, cut off 36,000 Protestants in
 the *Netherlands*.

The ^c horrible and infernal Court of *Inquisi-
 tion* is said, in about 30 Years, to have ^d con-
 sumed 150,000, by various Kinds of Torments,
 and still remains in *Spain, Portugal, Italy*, and
 other Places; on Purpose to hinder all free In-
 quiry, and to keep Mankind in the greatest
 Ignorance of the *true Religion*, and in a most
 slavish Subjection to an *Hierarchy* of ambitious,
 lazy, and debauched *Priests*.

The cruel Imprisonment, scourging, and
 burning of the *Martyrs* here in *England*, and
 the horrid and prodigious *Massacres* in *France*
 and *Ireland* can never surely be forgot. No

^a See *Mede's Works*, p. 503.

^b *Ibid.* p. 504.

^c Who-
 ever would see a faithful and authentic Account of the Rise, Pro-
 gress, and Laws of the *Inquisition*; and of the inhumane Treat-
 ment that such as differ from the *Church of Rome* there meet with,
 — let them read *Limborch's History of the Inquisition*, translated
 by the Rev. Mr. *Candler*.

^d See *Mede's Works*, p. 504.

benevolent Person can read the Accounts, at this Distance of Time, without weeping Eyes and a bleeding Heart.

Persecution is a distinguishing Character of *this Apostate*. If to wear ^a out the saints of the most high, and to slay such as are witnesses ^b for Truth, Virtue, and Liberty, and that bear their Testimony against Impositions, Violence and Persecution; if to ^c make war with the saints, and frequently to prevail against, and overcome them; and even to be ^d drunk with the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of JESUS.— If these Things, I say, can possibly be accomplished, they have been, and still are accomplished by the cruel and tyrannical Church of Rome.

By every one that is called a God, must be understood earthly Magistrates, or temporal Princes; for Θ:ς, without the Article, doth often signify a God; and here 'tis evidently opposed to ο Θ:ς, THE GOD, or the one true GOD, in whose Temple *this Man of Sin* was to sit. So Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7. "I have said ye are gods, "and all of you are children of the most high; "but ye shall die like men, and fall like one "of the princes." And Verse 1. of that Psalm, "God standeth in the congregation of the "mighty, he judges among the gods" ^e.

But as Σεασηα seems plainly to be an Allusion to Σεας, the Greek Name of the Cæsars, or Roman Emperors; 'tis possible that the APOSTLE might, in both the Phrases, refer to the

^a Dan. vii. 25.

^b Rev. xi 7. 8.

^c Ibid. xiii 4—7.

^d Ibid. xvii. 6.

^e See also Ezek. xxviii. 2, 6, 9. John x. 34,

35. 1 Cor. viii. 5.

Roman Emperors; who, after their Deaths, were (most of them) inroll'd among the *Gods*. Nay, *Caius*, before his Death, laid Claim to Divinity, and would needs be acknowledged and worshiped as a *God*.

That by the *Temple of God*, where this *Impostor* was to fix his Seat, may be understood the *Christian Church*, will appear, if it be considered that the *Christian Church*, is, in the *New Testament*, often called the *Temple of God*,^a or compared to the *Temple*. And in this *Temple* 'tis prophesied, that the *Man of Sin* would exalt himself above all *temporal Magistrates, Kings, and Emperors*. And 'tis very easy to point out the Accomplishment of this Part of the *Prophecy*; for how proudly hath the *Bishop of Rome* thus exalted himself, and been stiled, by his Flatterers and vile Dependants, a^b *God*, who ought not to be called to an Account; the supreme Deity on Earth, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, by whom Princes reign, and upon whom the Right of Kings depends? Nay, the *Glossator* upon the *Canon Law* hath given him the high and blasphemous Title, of *our Lord God the Pope*. And the *Popes* have acted accordingly, absolving Subjects from their Allegiance to their lawful Princes, fomenting and raising Rebellions, deposing or murdering rightful Princes, and setting up others in their Stead. With what Pride and Haughtiness have they called *Emperors* their Vassals? and even obliged some of them to hold the Bridle till

^a 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22.
 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. iii. 6. 1. Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7. Rev. iii. 12.
^b Vid. Canon. Distinct. 96. c. satis evidencia.

the Pope has mounted his Horse: Or to bear up his Train after him, when *his Holiness* has been pleased to walk in a pompous Procession? Nay, with what amazing Insolence have the *Romish Priests* whipt Kings and sovereign Princes, and the *Pope* has even set his Foot upon an *Emperor's* Neck? He has claimed the sole Right of nominating, investing, or confirming the Princes and Rulers of the Earth.

If this be not ^a to *exalt himself above all that is called a God*, or an *Emperor*; there can be no Event, to answer this, or any *Prophecy* whatsoever.

I think *Σελαμια* was designed to refer to the *Roman Emperor*. But if we understand it (as some do) of Objects of, or Things pertaining to *Religious Worship*: — The *Prophecy* is still accomplished. For doth not the *Bishop of Rome* claim the sole Power of ordaining Sacraments, consecrating Altars and Images, canonizing Saints, and appointing what Sort of *religious Worship* shall be paid; as well as to whom? Otherwise, how comes it to pass, that the *Virgin Mary* is more frequently invoked than the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*? Is not this, most evidently, a *religious Tyranny* founded in, and still supported by the Pretence of *Religion*? Other *Potentates* have sometimes called in Religion for a Pretence, and laid aside that Pretence, when their Purpose has been served; but no *Tyranny*, besides this, hath been intirely founded in, and all along carried on, merely by a Pretence to *Re-*

^a In this Expression there seems to be an evident Allusion to Dan. xi. 36.

ligion. And how exactly has THE APOSTLE prophesied of this? when he foretold, that he would *sit in the Temple of God* (not *a God*, or temporal Potentate; but) *as a God*, i. e. under another, a religious Pretence^a, he would lay Claim to the Power of a *temporal Monarch*, (*in ordine ad spiritualia*) under the Pretence of being *the Head of the Catholick Church*, and having *all spiritual Power*, he would thus exalt himself. And, I need not say, that under this Colour, the *Bishop of Rome* has claimed a most exorbitant Power, and that herein *this his Kingdom is diverse from all Kingdoms*. For other Princes rule in their own Dominions, by their temporal Power. But, under the Notion of spiritual Power, the *Pope* claims Obedience in Kingdoms and Countries, where a foreign temporal Prince could have no Claim. So that tho' he does not directly pretend to be *a God*, or *a temporal Prince*; yet he shows himself to be one; and hath often been, in Reality, possessed of equal, or greater Power.

From our saying, that "by the *Temple of GOD*, in this *Prophecy*, is meant the *Christian Church*," Bellarmine would infer, "that then the *Church of Rome*, must be the *Church of God*: For there the *Pope* sitteth upon his Throne." But his Argument is vain and frivolous. And no more will hence follow, than that the *Church of Rome* may be called "*the Church of GOD*," in the same Sense that an ^b *adulterous Woman* may be called *a Wife*; or, as the greatest Corruptions may retain the Names, which

^a Lactant. l. vii. §. 7. Rex ille teterrimus, sed Mendaciorum propheta, & seipsum constituet, & vocabit Deum, &c.

^b Rev. xvii. 1, 2, &c.

were given in the Times of the greatest Simplicity and Purity.

V. 6. "And ye know what now hinders, that " he may be revealed in his own proper season." From St. PAUL's cautious and ^a covert Manner of speaking, lest he should offend the higher Powers, as well as from other Arguments, 'tis highly probable that the *Roman Emperors* were the obstructing Power. And 'tis remarkable, that, upon that very Account, the ^a *primitive Christians* used to pray for the Continuance of the *Roman Empire*, viz. "to hinder the Appearance of *Antichrist*."

^b *Tertullian* (who flourished toward the Conclusion of the second Century) saith, "Now " the Mystery of Iniquity worketh, only he " who letteth, will lett, 'till he be taken out " of the Way. What is this (says he) but the " ^c *Roman Empire*."

And ^d St. *Jerome*, when he heard that *Rome* was taken by *Alaricus* the *Goth*, shewed plainly, that he expected the Appearance of *Anti-Christ*, upon the Removal of the *Roman Empire*, and wondered that it was not more speedy. "For (says he) he that hindered, is taken out " of the Way, and yet we do not understand " that *Anti-Christ* approaches."

V. 7. "For the Mystery of Iniquity already " works; only there is one that obstructs, till " he be taken out of the Way."

^a Vid. St. *Aust.* de Civitate Dei, l. xx. c. 19. Carnis. c. 24.

^b De Resur. ^c See also *Lactant.* l. vii. §. 16, 17. and *Jerome* on *Daniel*, who says it was a general Opinion, that towards the End of the World 10 Kings should share the *Roman Empire*; and that *Anti-Christ* should be the 11th, and overcome them all.

^d Ad *Geront.* de *Monogam.*

'Tis impossible for us to know more of the Tendency towards *this grand Apostasy* in the APOSTLES Days, than the APOSTLES or *primitive Christians* have mentioned in *their Writings*. *Hymæneus* and *Alexander* subverted the *Christians*, by teaching false Doctrines. *Diotrephes* aspired after the Preeminence. *Demas* over-loved this present World. Others are charged with making a Gain of Godliness. Some by a false Humility fell into the Worship of *Angels*; others placed *Religion* in a Distinction between Meats and Drinks, forbidding to marry, and injoining Abstinence from such Things as God allows; and finally, many others placed their *Religion* in Festivals, and New-Moons, in a Distinction between Days and Weeks, Months and Years: Not considering that "*the Kingdom of God* consisted in "*Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the holy Spirit.*" From such Corruptions of *Christianity* it was, that St. JOHN said "There "*were then many Anti-Christ.*" As we know what the *Apostasy* is, at its Height, we may justly conclude, that every Corruption in Worship, Faith, or Practice, was a making Way for *this Apostasy*; somewhat of the Spirit of the *Man of Sin*, or the *Mystery of Iniquity* then working. And (according to this Part of the *Prophecy*) 'tis well known, that they have not arriv'd to their *grand Corruption of Christianity*, but Step by Step; and at the first by slow and almost insensible Degrees.

V. 8. "And then shall be revealed that "*wicked one, or lawless person,*" and 'tis notoriously evident, that the Removal of the

Roman Emperors did actually open the Way for the Advancement of the *Bishop of Rome* to his Power and Grandeur. Then was *that wicked one* signally revealed. *ὁ ἀνταρστής*, *that lawless Person*; how proper a Title for him, who hath been declared to be subject to no Law, but that he can, by the Plenitude of his Power, make Right Wrong, and Wrong Right, Virtue Vice, and Vice Virtue; that he can dispense with all Laws, humane and divine. And that he may do all Things above Law, against Law, and without Law?

V. 8. ("Whom the LORD will consume by the breath of his mouth, and will utterly abolish by the brightness of his coming:") These Words must be considered, as thrown in by Way of *Parentthesis*. Or else his Destruction, mentioned in this Verse, will be placed before his Coming and exalting himself to such Power, by the most wicked and deceitful Methods, mentioned in the next Verse. And I suppose that it was thrown in to comfort the *Christians*, under such a Prospect, by the assured Hopes of *this Tyranny's* coming to an End.

As the last Sentence was inserted by Way of *Parentthesis*, we may go on with the principal Subject, as if it had not been there; V. 9, 10, 11, 12. When the obstructing Power is removed. "Then shall that wicked one be revealed, whose coming is after the working of *Satan*, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders;" and with the most fraudulent and unrighteous Cheats; tho' none need to be deluded thereby, if they are Lovers of Truth and Virtue.

The

The many Pretences to *Miracles* in the *Church of Rome* have abundantly fulfilled this, They have asserted that *Churches* have been taken up in one Place, and carried thro' the Air into distant Countries. That Images have nodded, smiled, frowned, or spoken upon Occasion. That the Blood of a Saint hath been annually liquefied on a certain Day of the Year, That the ^a first Convert St. *Gaul* made in *Germany* was a Bear. That St. *Antony of Padua* preach'd to a vast Assembly of Fishes, whom he had miraculously called together, and who devoutly heard him *preach the Word of the LORD*. That St. *Francis* preached with great Success to Birds and Beasts, which he thought OUR LORD had commanded, *Mark* xvi. 15. when he bade the APOSTLES to "Go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature."

Numberless have been the fictitious Apparitions of the Souls of dead Men, in order to prove such a State as *Purgatory*. Nay, to prove this, what have they not pretended to? Voices from Heaven or Hell; Cures at the Shrines of their Saints, or by their Bones and Reliques; to which they have sometimes ascrib'd the Power to raise Persons from the Dead! all the *Legends* and lying Wonders which the most diabolical Invention could contrive, have been made use of, to found and support this notorious *Apostasy*.

For my own Part I question the Reality of all their Miracles ^b. But suppose any of them

^a *Addison's Travels*, p. 284. *ibid.* p. 47. &c. ^b *Vid. St. Austin. de Civit. Dei*, l. xx. c. 19. However, that they lay Claim to *Miracles*, see the late Popish Catechism, Appendix, §. 13.

to be real, a *Miracle* only sheweth that some *Being* interposes, who is superior in Power to Man. And, as we must judge by the Doctrine and Practice they would promote, whether *Miracles* are worked by a good or a bad Spirit; 'tis evident that (if they work any *real Miracles*) they are assisted by a *malevolent and wicked Spirit*; because they would thereby promote Ignorance and Falshood, Idolatry and Wickedness.

They have, likewise, by the most unrighteous Deceit, appeared as profess'd Friends to *Christianity* ^a, tho' really its greatest Enemies.

They have canonized Men for Saints, who have been the most flagitious Sinners. And have consecrated Murders, Treasons, Massacres, and Rebellions, by promising their Votaries, that they should not pass thro' the Fire of *Purgatory*, but should have immediate Entrance into Heaven; suppose they should be cut off in perpetrating such black and horrid Crimes.

It were endless to mention their pious Frauds, and specious astonishing Methods to encrease their Number; to draw in the worst of Men, and to discourage the best; in order to gratify their own exorbitant Lust of Power and Ambition.

And must not Men have cast off *the Love of*

^a Lactant. l. vii. § 19. Hic est autem, qui appellatur *Antichristus*; sed se ipse Christum mentietur; & contra verum dimicabit. How remarkably applicable is this to the *Bishop of Rome*, who lays Claim to the Title "of the *Successor of St. PETER, and CHRIST's Vicar upon Earth*; and consequently, the Father and Pastor of all the Faithful?" See the late Popish Catechism, c. ult.

Truth,

Truth, who can delight in their fabulous Traditions, and monstrous lying *Legends*, and tamely give up *the Scriptures*, or speak of them with Contempt.

Thus have I briefly gone thro' the several Parts of *this Prophecy*, and shewn (I think) that *no Prophecy* can be more exactly accomplished.

C O R O L L A R I E S.

(1.) "From what hath been said 'tis easy to judge concerning *Popery* and the *Reformation*." 'Tis not the Largeness of a *Church*, nor her external Pomp and ^a Splendour, which makes her the *true Church*. Nor are they always the *Schismatics*, who are the fewest in Number. No, suppose all the *Nations* of the Earth should generally agree together, in maintaining absurd Doctrines, immoral and unreasonable Practices, Uncharitableness and Impositions. — They are properly the *Heretics* and *Schismatics*; and let the Number who separate from them, in Defence of Truth, Virtue, Liberty, and Charity, be never so few, they are in Reality the *true Church*. And the other is only a *grand Schism*, or *worldly Faction*: Even tho' their Party be as numerous, as that with the Soles of their Feet they could dry up Rivers.

Holding the Truth in Love is a Mark of the *true Church*. And such as forsake this are *Apostates*. Such is the *Schism*, *Faction*, and *Apostasy* of the present *Church of Rome*; that

^a See the *Appendix* to the late *Popish Catechism*. §. 2.

Mother of Idolatries, and of the Abominations of the Earth. And Reformation is a most glorious Thing, when founded upon its right *Basis* of Reason and Scripture, Liberty and Charity.

(2.) "How strong an Argument may, what hath been said, afford us for the Truth of *the Christian Religion?*" Here was a most signal Event foretold, and that many Ages before it came to pass; — An Event, the like to which had never happened since the Creation of the World, (and, most probably, there never will happen such another;) it was, therefore, an Event, which was out of the Reach of all humane Conjecture, or Foresight. And yet Experience hath shewn that the *Prediction* was exact.

Neither *Enthusiasts*, nor *Impostors* could, possibly, have guessed so agreeably to so uncommon an Event. Nor can we, who have lived to see so much of the Accomplishment, describe *this Apostasy* in a more just, or lively Manner, than St. PAUL has here done, in a few Verses, and St. JOHN, more largely, in the *Revelation*.

They, therefore, must have been *true Prophets* and *divinely inspir'd*: Or else they never could have uttered such remarkable *Predictions*, which Time and Fact have so amazingly verified.

Some other Arguments for the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, tho' just and conclusive, may be of a more subtle and difficult Nature: But the Rise and Progress of *this Apostasy* is a Fact, a plain, notorious, well known Fact: An Argument which cannot easily

easily be evaded; but must strike the Virtuous and Attentive!

All *Church History*, for several past *Centuries*, is full of it; and we need only open our Eyes, and we may behold too much of it. For *the Man of Sin* is even now upon *his Throne*, exalting himself, as much as he can, above all the Kings of the Earth; and with such strong Delusions seducing the *Nations*, as to make many of them believe a Lye. They may pretend, among us, that *Popery* is alter'd, and become *a meek and harmless Religion*; and, that they have thrown off that *persecuting Spirit*, which they have formerly discovered. But how lately have we heard of the dismal Effects of their cruel and tyrannical Temper? and the poor banished *Saltzburghers* (whom 'tis the Glory of this *Protestant Nation* so generously to have relieved) are too fresh an Instance and Proof of the *persecuting Spirit* of *Popery*, to suffer it to be believed among us, that the *Church of Rome*, tho' dressed up in Sheep's Cloathing, is any other than a ravenous Wolf.

OUR ANCESTORS felt the dreadful Effects of their *persecuting Spirit*, and experienced their tender Mercies to be cruel. Nay, we ourselves were in imminent Danger: But by a remarkable Interposition of the divine Providence, the Snare was broken, and we have escaped. Yet all pious and benevolent Persons are daily mourn-

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ing over this *anti-christian Corruption* and *Tyranny*; and ready to say, "How long, O Lord, holy, just, and true; wilt not thou deliver thine Elect, that cry unto thee Day and Night!"

CHRISTIANITY is a *Religion* reasonable in itself, promotes the purest Virtue, was at first planted by *Miracles* and great Plenty of *spiritual Gifts*. And here is a remarkable *Prophecy*, which (after so many hundred Years) is exactly verified, by a notorious Event. What Evidences would be sufficient, where all these are rejected?

(3.) "We ought not to be shocked at the present State of the *Christian Church*. Because such, did the APOSTLES of OUR LORD *prophecy*, that it would be." Tho' the best of Things are liable to Corruption; yet one would hardly have thought it possible, that so great, so notorious a *Corruption*, could (by any Pretence) have sprung out of the *Christian Religion*. Look into the *New Testament*, which contains the *Religion* of JESUS, and look into the Polity and Constitution of the *Church of Rome*; and you may easily perceive that Light and Darknes are not more unlike. The *Gospel* every where requires the greatest Virtue and Purity, and this wicked Church (which schismatically calls herself the *Catholick and only true Church*) has invented so many Arts, to make Men very

* See the Appendix to the late Popish Catechism, §. 3.
religious

religious, without any Virtue or Goodness at all; that (wherever 'tis established and prevails) it encourages almost all Manner of Wickedness and Abominations.

DANIEL ^a *prophefied* that the God of Heaven would erect a Kingdom, which should be subject to the Son of Man; and we say, that *this Kingdom of Righteousness* was actually erected by OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Now, upon looking abroad into a great Part of *Christendom*, 'tis natural to inquire, "Is this the Kingdom prophefied of?"

No, to prevent the Anxiety, which might arise in the Minds of *true Christians* from such a Difficulty, it was also *prophefied*, that out of *this spiritual Kingdom* should arise one of the greatest *Apostasies* and *Corruptions* that ever appeared in the World. Though *true Christianity* (as contained in the *Scriptures*) have all along been invariably the same.

(4.) "How ought we to rejoice that *this tyrannical and unrighteous power* shall come to an end? and think ourselves obliged. (from a sense of our duty to God, and out of *Benevolence to Mankind*) to do every Thing, in our Power, towards bringing about so happy an Event?"

BLESSED BE GOD that we are delivered from this worse than *Egyptian Dark-*

^a Dan ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.

ness and Slavery. Particularly, let us reflect, with Gratitude, upon our narrow Escape under the auspicious Conduct of *the glorious Prince of Orange, K. William* of immortal Memory, who (by the Favour of a kind Providence) laid the Foundation for a later Escape, when, by Means of a persecuting and bigotted Faction, a *Poish Pretender* was ready to ascend the Throne. Then it was that *King William's* noble Legacy took Place, by the Coming in of *the illustrious House of Hanover.* A Family, who were amongst the *first Protesters against Popery*, and who have ever since continued *Protestants.* And (which hath been, in a distinguishing Manner, the Glory of that illustrious House; and attended with the greatest and most diffusive Blessings; — they have, upon many Occasions, been) strenuous Asserters of Liberty, both civil and religious.

BLESSED BE GOD for such a *royal Family*, and let all the People say AMEN. May they and their Descendants continue Friends to Mankind, throughout all coming Generations! and experience the Joys and ample Blessings which attend the sincere Love of Truth, Virtue, Religion, and Liberty!

'Tis said that this corrupt and persecuting *Religion* gains Ground in this free and Protestant Nation; and even in this
Day

Day of Light and Liberty. — But what Madness must possess such as would bring us back again into this *spiritual Egypt*? When all wise Men would avoid her, for Fear of, at last, partaking in her Plagues?

'Tis the Duty of all *Protestants* to give up whatever *absurd Doctrines*, or *imposing Principles*, they may have hitherto mixed with what is truly reasonable and *Christian*. 'Till then, it must be expected that *Popery* will always get Footing among us.

THANKS BE TO GOD, that we have *the Scriptures* so common, and in our own Language; that we are allowed *the Liberty of private Judgment*; and blessed with so many, and such excellent Helps to understand *our Bible*! That such a *Spirit of Liberty* and free Inquiry hath, in this last Age, gone out into the Land! May Heaven diffuse this *happy Spirit*, and grant it the longest Continuance!

'Tis not 300 Years ago, since *our Ancestors* were required to believe the grossest *Absurdities*, and to practise the most flagrant *Idolatry*, and that upon Pain of forfeiting all that was dear to them in this World, and of being sentenced to eternal Damnation in the next.

Tho' the first Reformers made a glorious Stand, and went great Lengths, in a little Time; yet they could not shake off one of the worst Parts of *Popery*, viz. *the Spirit of Infallibility and Persecution*. And a Race of
tyran-

tyrannical Kings, supported by *covetous and ambitious Priests*, continued to practise upon *Protestants*, that Cruelty, which all *Protestants* had so much and so justly exclaimed against, when practised by the *Papists* upon themselves. By this Means it has come to pass, that *true Liberty*, and *free Inquiry* are but of Yesterday. — A Blessing reserved by Providence for us!

The most acceptable Way of testifying our Gratitude to ALMIGHTY GOD, for so great, so unspeakable a Blessing, is to study the *Scriptures* with Care, and to form our Temper and Practice accordingly. — To allow others that *Liberty of private Judgment*, which we ourselves so ardently desire. To avoid Uncharitableness towards such as differ from us, and to show our Good-Will to the Persons of the *Papists*; whilst we so much and so justly abhor *their Religion*. Let us ever take Care to watch against a *persecuting Spirit*, in all the Branches and Degrees of it; and to lay the great Stress of *Religion*, where the *Scriptures of the New Testament* have laid it (not in abstruse Notions, and unintelligible Subtleties: Not in Forms and Ceremonies, nor in an empty Profession of the purest and best Religion; but) upon the sincere Love of God and one another; upon a due governing our Passions and sensual Appetites, and the habitual Practice of universal Holiness. For what signifieth it *what Church*
any

any Man belongs to, what Profession of *Religion* he makes, or what Advantages he enjoys; — if he doth not love God and keep his Commandments? If he abuses his Liberty to Licentiousness; and in the Midst of such marvellous Light, shows that he loves Darkness, by leading a scandalous and wicked Life; which, of all others, is the *blackest Heresy*, and the most flagrant and most notorious *Corruption and Apostasy*?

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